



Want to Make Money with Your Music? Go on a DIY Tour

BY

<http://machusmedia.com>

What good is your music if no one hears it? And what good is talent if no one sees it? You began playing to get seen and heard. You went into this business to make money. At no other time in history has the creative had so much control over his or her professional destiny.

Here are five ways performing pays:

[Become a hometown headliner at local venues](#)

DIY tours

Public and private gigs

Busking

Royalties

In the these five posts, we dive into each of these income streams to see how others have done it and are doing it. If you have something to say, please join the conversation and tell us how you're doing it. [Artist promotion](#) isn't that difficult if you think outside the box a little.

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I Have a Song, Now What? Go on a DIY Tour

But assess, plan and research before you get on the bus.

Make sure you're ready to tour. If you haven't played a couple hometown headliners, you're not ready. While your hometown venue knows its audience and is willing to take a chance on a local act, out-of-town concert promoters aren't going to be so eager. They want evidence that you'll sell in their town the way you did back home—evidence in the form of ticket sale receipts and videos of your live performances.

Tours take months to plan. So just like when you planned your first hometown concert, find out where your audience likes to hang out. If you've had success playing hip hop clubs, big cities are where you want to be. If you're a solo artist with an acoustic guitar, you probably want to check out suburban as well as urban areas. Choose four or five cities you want to try out and begin researching venues within each one.

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Venue research is key. Indie on the Move is a great starting point. Show respect by going on each venue's website and finding out what it's about, what kind of music is played there, what it looks like, what it will and won't accommodate and what dates are already booked vs. what dates are still available. This will make you look like a professional when you call (yes call, not email) to book your date. Plus, knowing something about their venue will give you something to talk about and help you ask intelligent questions, all of which will impress the decision maker on the other end of the line.

And again, think small. You'd rather book small and sell out than book big and show small. Build your fan base by leaving them wanting more. Book a bigger house to accommodate the new fans word of mouth creates for the next time you're in town.

Find at least one opening act in each town. This will help fill the house (making you more marketable to venues) and maximize promotions and ticket sales.

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Once you're ready to negotiate, know your options. Here are a couple scenarios:

Guarantee (the venue pays you no matter how many people attend)

- A cut of the door (they pay you a percentage of each ticket sold)
- Donations (venue doesn't pay you directly, but you can solicit donations and sell your merch):
- Pay-to-play (you pay the venue to play there—only advantageous to established bands looking to boost fan base.)

Be sure you get things in writing—a contract that spells out payment terms and a stage plot.

Plan your route. Carefully. Gas is expensive and so is your time. Make sure you leave enough time to travel to each destination and to rest, promote and adequately prepare (load in, sound check, etc.) once you get there.

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A word about accommodations. Veteran road jockeys have established relationships with fans who will house and feed them while on the road. It's good idea for a couple reasons: this business is all about relationships, and spending quality time with fans is a good way to build them. Plus, it creates an opportunity for a house gig with a take of the door, and great word-of-mouth to build on your existing fan base. If you haven't yet cultivated those contacts, you may want to. Meantime, be sure you pack an air mattress, ear plugs and eye mask to get rest where and when you can. And about that tour bus...it probably isn't in your budget—yet. But any dependable, well-serviced vehicle big enough for your band and its equipment (or a hitch for a trailer) will do.

Artist promotion is a tricky art, but absolutely necessary. Connect with your opening bands and booked venues online. Tweet with fans. Instagram photos from the road. Post your itinerary on your Facebook page. Reach out to radio stations and music stores in each town you're playing and ask if you can do an interview or music spin. Send out press releases to newspapers and magazines in each destination. Look for event promotion services that can help. Do anything and everything you can to get the word out about your upcoming dates.

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Finally, make the most of each tour day. Don't push the driving. You want to be well rested for the shows and your fans. And you also want pre-concert time to do some promotions: radio interviews and music spins if you've booked them, and visits to music stores—all great fodder for social media marketing and promotion.

And don't leave home without your merchandise. They can be wicked revenue streams. Make sure you promote them from the stage.

P.S. There's cash in the college market. College tours pay up to \$1,500 a night. Plus, you get housed, fed and handled by a coordinator who books all your gigs for you. Sweet deal if your music appeals to the college crowd.

The music biz is wide open for people like you with ambition and drive. Don't wait for your big break. Make it happen. If want to learn more about [how to promote my music online](#), [let us know and get started today!](#)

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As CEO of Machus Corporation, James Ussery has navigated the Internet frontier for nearly 30 years. He's gone from websites, to massive international white label online marketing, and now Machus Media, a stop for musicians & authors to promote digital work via the Internet and social media. For more information Please Visit

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